

OCTOBER 2021

# culture connect

ABBOTSFORD

CULTURE STRATEGY | DRAFT





Illustrated Culture Map of Abbotsford. This map is a non-exhaustive illustration of various cultural locations throughout Abbotsford. Designer - Baker Street Design Co.



## Vision

**Rich Cultural Experiences for All:** Abbotsford will be a place of rich and diverse cultural experiences and resources that are the essential ingredients of a vibrant community of connected people and neighbourhoods.



"Luminous Waters" puppet performance inspired by the book Semá:th Xó:tsa Sts'ólemeqwelh Sxó:tsa /Great-Gramma's Lake by The Reach Gallery Museum and UFV SoCA Theatre Students.



## Encouragement

Donna Bishop

WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE WIND  
THE PRICKLY THISTLE MAY NEVER  
HAVE KNOWN A NEW THING IT CAN DO,  
AS IT TUMBLES JOYOUSLY, DANCING  
OVER PRAIRIE FIELDS.  
WILL YOU OR I BE THE BREEZES  
THAT LIFT THE MUNDANE IN OTHERS  
INTO THEIR NEW JOYOUS DANCE?

## The Artist

Michael Linburg

The artist's life  
approaches art  
with each stroke  
mastered  
to lighten  
to brighten  
his impression  
to brush away  
a hazy day  
to clear up  
Tomorrow



Public Art Mural: "Palfy Wall" by Robert Bateman Students, 2013



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This portion of Old Yale Road was added to the Community Heritage Register in 2014. The right-of-way was established in 1874 as part of the New Westminster-Hope Wagon Road. The 1.38 km section along the base of Vedder Mountain was a single lane road that was built closely along a First Nations transportation route that linked Sema:th, Matheqwi and Nooksack First Nations. The route is well elevated above the shoreline of what used to be Sumas Lake to prevent flooding during high water periods.





Newest CITI/SEEN mural in downtown Abbotsford along Bob Bos Lane by Sara Khan, Pearl Bains, Alex Svarez, Cassidy Luteijn, Julia Martens

## Summary

Culture Connect, the City's first Culture Strategy, sets out the commitment and future plans for supporting and advancing culture locally over the next 20 years. It is the result of over two years of extensive research, engagement, consultation and design.

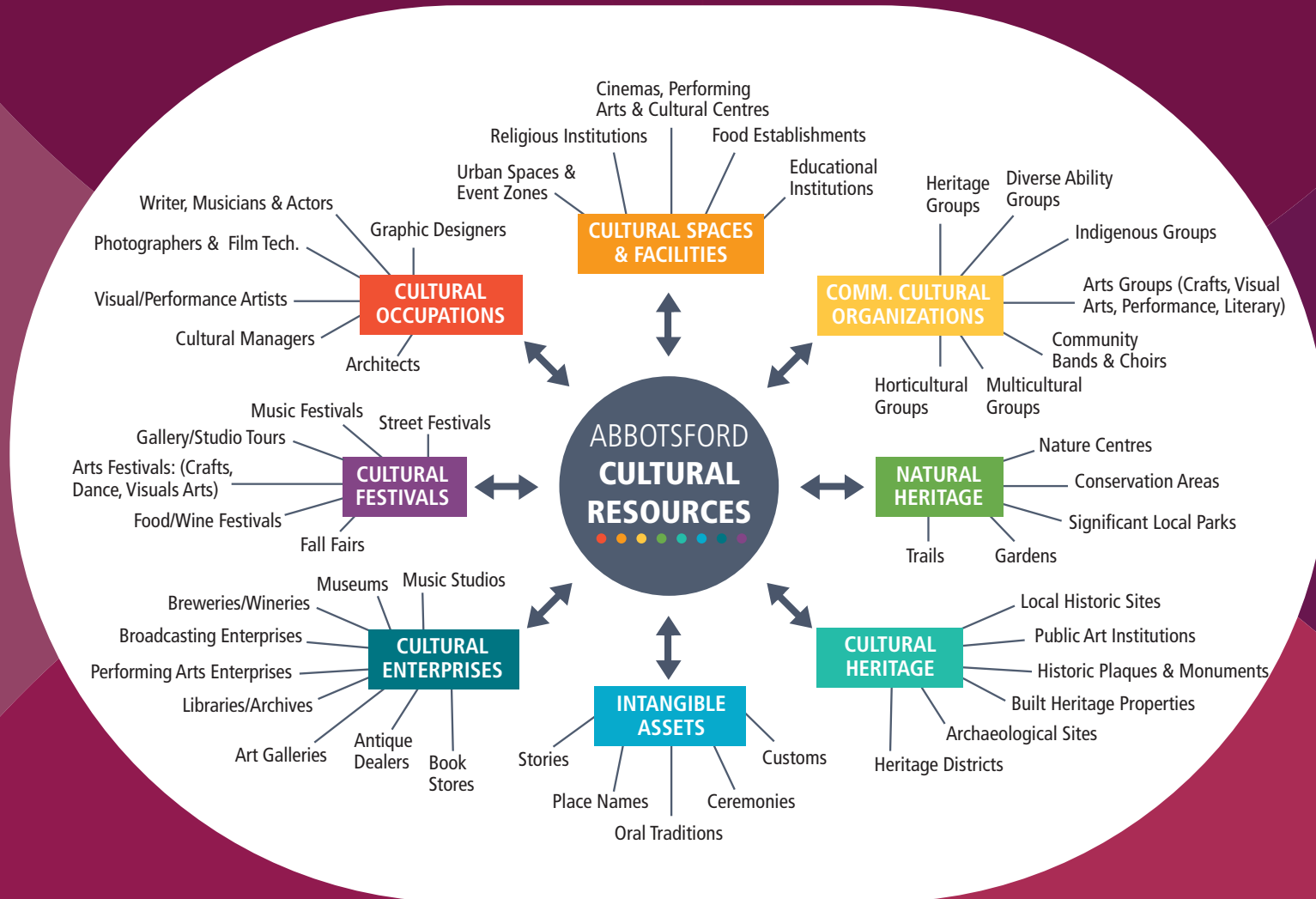
Abbotsford is the fifth largest City in BC with a population of 141,395 (Stats Canada, 2016 Demographic Profile) and is rapidly growing. We are one of the most ethnically diverse communities in Canada, and are home to a variety of rich natural, arts and heritage assets. The City of Abbotsford aimed to develop a Strategy that would strengthen these areas, celebrate our diverse cultural heritage, and identify new opportunities to grow our cultural ecosystem. While the process was led by the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department, it was developed based on input and

involvement from key cultural stakeholders and the broader community.

Ultimately, the Strategy establishes the vision for culture in Abbotsford - not only what we want our programs, services and places to look like, but what we want our cultural identity to be. It aligns aspirations and resources around key goals, objectives and actions providing a roadmap that will enable Abbotsford to realize this vision in a fiscally responsible way.

While the Strategy is intended to cover a 20 year planning horizon, times are more uncertain than ever before. This will be a living document that is updated at regular 5 year intervals to ensure the objectives and actions remain relevant and responsive to community needs.

# CULTURAL RESOURCES FRAMEWORK



\* Statistics Canada Framework for Cultural Statistics adapted from Mississippi Mills Municipal Cultural Plan



# Introduction

## What is Culture?

Culture can mean many things to many people. When asked “What does Culture Mean to You?”, participants provided a wide range of responses demonstrating just how difficult it can be to narrow down a precise definition. It is no surprise then, that diversity was identified as a common theme, along with community, festivals, events and connecting.

The City's Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan identified six Cultural Services areas within Abbotsford: Visual Arts, Public Art,



Jam In Jubilee is an annual event hosted by the Abbotsford Arts Council

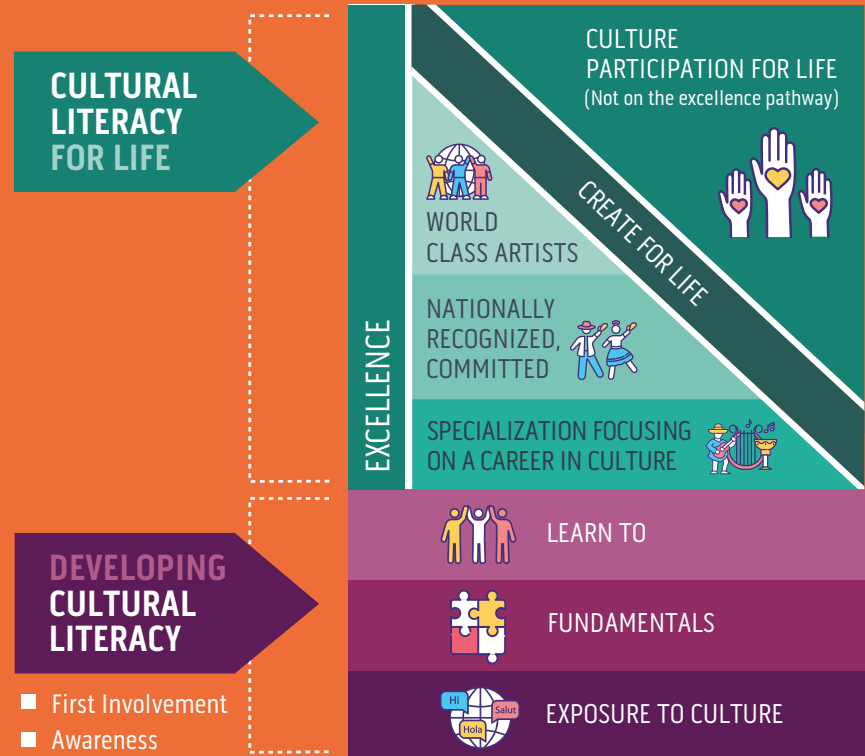
Heritage, Performing Arts, Entertainment and Festivals, and Libraries.

There are a plethora of cultural resources that exist within a community and include the various tangible and intangible things that contribute to the culture of a place and which are essential to municipal cultural planning and development. Abbotsford is home to many of these cultural resources that all contribute to a sense of place and being.

# CULTURE FOR LIFE

## A CULTURE STRATEGY ALLOWS THE CITY TO PLAN FOR A “CULTURE FOR LIFE” MODEL

where people across the spectrum of experience with culture are able to enjoy and access culture opportunities at a level they would find engaging for their personal understanding and skills.



Modified from the Sport for Life Rectangle. (Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity. Sport for Life Society. 2019)



Matsqui Village Walking Tour hosted by Heritage Abbotsford Society

“When we talk about the value of arts and culture, we should always start with the intrinsic- how arts and culture illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world.”

– Sir Peter Bazalgette, Arts Council England

## Why a Culture Strategy?

Arts and culture goes well beyond its intrinsic value. As one of the four key pillars of community sustainability - along with economic growth, social equity and environmental responsibility - cultural vitality is critical to creating a sense of place and identity, enhancing quality of life and contributing to economic prosperity.

If it is understood and acknowledged that culture is an imperative for Abbotsford, then a strategy to manage and leverage culture for the community is essential. The Culture Strategy identifies the community’s cultural assets and services, and provides a roadmap for how the City will deliver and support culture and integrate it into a wide range of local government planning activities. It will provide decision makers and partners with a framework for assigning roles and responsibilities, and setting priorities.

# STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Culture in Abbotsford aligns with and builds upon the priorities identified in the City's Official Community Plan – "Abbotsforward", City of Abbotsford's Strategic Plan 2019-2022, and the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan. This Strategy was developed as a five-stage process led by the Municipality, in collaboration with, and with input from internal stakeholders, the arts, culture and heritage communities and the broader public.

## PROJECT STATUS: CULTURE STRATEGY





## Stage 1

### BACKGROUND RESEARCH /KEY FINDINGS — “STATE OF CULTURE IN ABBOTSFORD”

(JULY 2019 — JUNE 2020)

In February 2020, a State of Culture Report was presented to Council that provided a summary of initial stakeholder engagement and background research. It reflected a thorough review of existing City plans and policies and the current arts, culture, and heritage offerings, assets and services in the City. It was also informed by current local, national and international municipal trends with respect to culture and comparisons to other communities, of similar size and context, in the region and across the country.

As a result of this research, and through workshops and interviews with important internal and external stakeholders - including City staff, fee-for-service partners, and some culture community representatives, a number of strengths, challenges and opportunities were revealed. From these, a series of overarching initial themes emerged – themes that informed preliminary directions for the City.

#### STRENGTHS



- Charity
- Diversity
- Volunteerism
- Committed Culture Partners
- Community Facilities
- Natural Heritage
- Independence
- Renewed City Focus on Culture

#### CHALLENGES



- Funding / Expenditures
- Social & Geographical Considerations
- Inclusivity
- Artist Retention / Creative Spaces
- Indigenous Engagement
- Heritage & Conservation
- Cultural Tourism

#### OPPORTUNITIES



- Collaboration with Public & Private Partners
- Redefining Cultural Spaces
- Youth Engagement
- Abbotsford Arts Council
- Strong South Asian Culture
- Indigenous Community Engagement
- Role of Municipality
- Cultural Tourism





 **Stage 2**

**Exploring Options**

(JULY 2020 –  
NOVEMBER 2020)

The Exploring Options Report built upon the research, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities identified in the State of Culture Report. It translated the input received from extensive internal and external stakeholder engagement as part of Stage 1 into preliminary directions, and potential actions, and laid the foundation for the Strategy itself.

**PRELIMINARY DIRECTIONS**

 <p><b>MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine the City's Cultural Leadership Role</li> <li>2. Preserve, Interpret and Present Abbotsford's Story</li> <li>3. Leverage Culture for Economic Development</li> </ol>	 <p><b>SPACES &amp; PLACES</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Assess and Plan for Cultural Infrastructure and Assets</li> <li>5. Connect People and Places</li> </ol>	 <p><b>CONNECTIONS &amp; COMMUNITY</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Engage Younger Generations</li> <li>7. Commit to Creating a New Relationship with Indigenous Peoples</li> <li>8. Promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</li> </ol>	 <p><b>OFFERINGS &amp; AWARENESS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Communicate All Abbotsford has to Offer</li> <li>10. Build New Audiences</li> </ol>
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### Stage 3

#### Draft Strategy

(NOVEMBER 2020 –  
SEPTEMBER 2021)

The Draft Strategy was developed following further input from Council, Council Advisory Committees, and other key stakeholders. It brought together all of the research, consultation, and dialogue and refines the findings from the previous two stages into more concrete goals, objectives and actions. As part of this phase, a second round of public engagement was initiated to ensure the content was reflective of the community's input.

### Stage 4

#### Final Strategy

(SEPTEMBER 2021 –  
DECEMBER 2021)

A Final Strategy will be presented for Council's approval.

### Stage 5

#### Implementation

(ONGOING)

An Implementation Plan will be developed following the adoption of the Final Strategy. This will outline who, where, what, when and how the actions identified in the Strategy will be implemented over five year planning phases and will inform budget planning on a yearly basis. This stage will be ongoing as the City implements the specific goals, objectives and actions approved in the Final Strategy.

## CULTURE CONNECT

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

Culture Connect is intended to serve the cultural needs of our diverse community; therefore, it was important to engage and hear from our partners, cultural professionals, and the general public. Engagement took place throughout the development of the Strategy, beginning with initial consultations with key internal and external stakeholders that led to the identification of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities as outlined in the State of Culture Report. Following the release of the Stage 1 report, consultation was expanded further to the broader community. Surveys, public workshops, and Host Your Own Engagement (HYOE) sessions were advertised, and hosted and facilitated both online and in-person. Cultural mapping activities were offered in the workshop session and online as well.

It should be noted that much of the public engagement took place during the COVID-19 global pandemic. While this did not stop engagement activities, it shifted them to primarily digital delivery methods focused on the online survey, zoom workshops and a virtual roadshow with key stakeholders. Ultimately, many in the community were still able to participate in the various engagement activities offered. While the pandemic further exposed the vulnerability of the cultural sector, in the face of crisis, so many turned to culture as a safe haven amplifying its importance. As one participant highlighted: “What do you have when you have lost everything? Culture”.

**In total, 898 residents responded to the public survey, 62 people participated in the in-person or virtual workshops, three HYOE, over 200 contributions to an online cultural mapping exercise, and followed by virtual roadshows concluding Stage 2.**

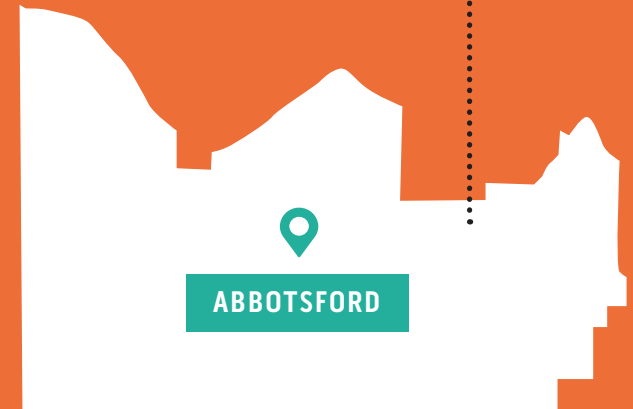
AT A GLANCE  
**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

**WHAT DOES  
CULTURE  
MEAN TO YOU?**



**CULTURAL  
ASSET MAP**

**200+  
MARKED**



**36**  
IDEAS

**LET'S TALK ABBOTSFORD.CA**

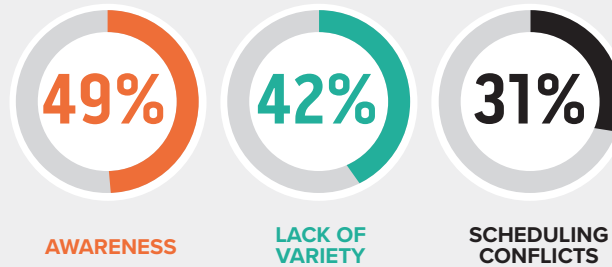
**LET'S TALK WEBSITE**



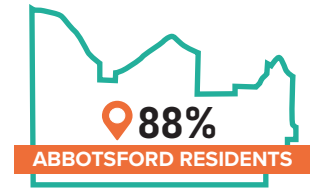
## What We Heard

Only 36% respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the current cultural offerings available within Abbotsford. This is likely a result of the barriers many face in accessing culture:

### TOP 3 BARRIERS TO ACCESS



## Who We Heard From



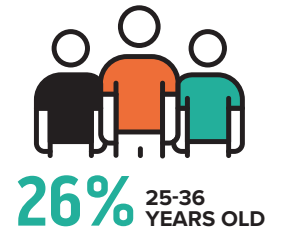
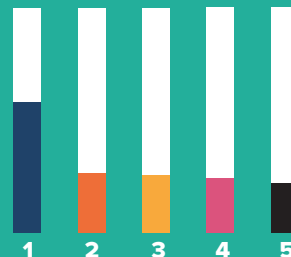
“Free public events and investment in youth who will continue to invest in the Abbotsford arts community will contribute to its longevity.”

- survey respondent

## Top 5 Priorities

We asked what the City should prioritize in the Culture Strategy:

- 1 More free & accessible public events
- 2 Inclusive & accessible culture activities
- 3 Diverse cultural heritage activities
- 4 Improved marketing
- 5 More funding for local arts & culture organizations



## PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT



## Top 3 Places

We asked what places respondents visited in the past year:



## Top 3 Experiences

- 73%** Going to the movies
- 72%** Visit the market
- 63%** Live music





## ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUES

### STAFF INCORPORATED FEEDBACK FROM 3 COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

1. Community, Culture and Environment Advisory Committee
2. Development, Transportation and Infrastructure Advisory Committee
3. Business, Innovation and Public Affairs Advisory Committee



## What We Learned

- Importance of honouring Indigenous heritage and local First Nations' culture and legacy
- Supporting equity, diversity and inclusion through all cultural resources.
- Lack of awareness, quality of offerings, and costs are biggest barriers to participation
- Most households spend less than \$50 per month on cultural activities within Abbotsford
- Increasing funding for Culture
- Abbotsford is home to many popular cultural assets
- Culture is an economic driver and catalyst of vibrant urban neighbourhoods
- Need for artist spaces
- Concern regarding lack of investment in culture and planning of purpose-built spaces, and focus on existing spaces, facilities and found spaces
- Using culture as a catalyst for a more vibrant, connected and welcoming Abbotsford
- Recognizing agricultural heritage and current food scene for cultural tourism and bridging differences



## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

STAFF WERE ALSO ABLE TO MEET WITH THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS AND GARNER ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK:

- The Reach Gallery Museum
- Heritage Abbotsford Society
- Abbotsford Arts Council
- Abbotsford Music School
- Abbotsford Youth Orchestra
- Abby Arts Collective
- Gallery 7 Theatre
- Indo Canadian Business Association
- Peace and Reconciliation Center (UFV)
- School of Creative Arts (UFV)
- South Asian Studies Institute (UFV)



**MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP**



**SPACES & PLACES**



**CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY**



**OFFERINGS & AWARENESS**

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

# CULTURE CONNECT

# AT A GLANCE

## VISION – RICH CULTURAL EXPERIENCES FOR ALL

Abbotsford will be a place of rich and diverse cultural experiences and resources that are the essential ingredients of a vibrant community of connected people and neighbourhoods.



### MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP

The City of Abbotsford demonstrates active leadership and strategic governance to support a sustainable, flourishing and vibrant cultural sector.



### SPACES & PLACES

Abbotsford is home to quality and versatile cultural spaces and places that encourage creativity and participation.



### CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY

Abbotsford is an inclusive and accessible community where diversity is celebrated and all residents are welcomed and empowered to participate in cultural opportunities.



### OFFERINGS & AWARENESS

Abbotsford is a creative City where people value and actively engage in culture.

<p><b>Objective 1.1</b> - Enhance investments in culture through strategic funding, community capacity building and continuous improvement in City processes.</p>	<p><b>Objective 2.1</b> - Assess and plan for cultural infrastructure and assets to meet short, medium and long-term needs.</p>	<p><b>Objective 3.1</b> - Engage local youth and emerging artists in the planning and development of cultural programs, facilities, events and services.</p>	<p><b>Objective 4.1</b> - Increase the visibility of culture in Abbotsford and communicate everything it has to offer.</p>
<p><b>Objective 1.2</b> - Enable a deeper understanding and appreciation of Abbotsford's past, present and future by recognizing the value of local cultural, natural, agricultural and built heritage.</p>	<p><b>Objective 2.2</b> - Use physical and digital spaces to accessibly connect people with culture and their community.</p>	<p><b>Objective 3.2</b> - Seek engagement with local First Nations, including Matheqwí, Semá:th, Leq'á:mel and urban Indigenous and Métis Peoples on cultural planning and policy development to reflect local Indigenous knowledge and heritage.</p>	<p><b>Objective 4.2</b> - Attract and build new audiences that support the cultural sector and improve quality of life for residents.</p>
<p><b>Objective 1.3</b> - Build the local creative economy and leverage culture to boost the City's economic advantage.</p>	<p><b>Objective 3.3</b> – Embrace Abbotsford's cultural diversity and cultivate a welcoming environment where all people and backgrounds are represented.</p>		<p><b>5 BIG MOVES</b></p>



Abbotsford Farmers Market at Jubilee Park





# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

The following sets out the goals, objectives and actions that will enable and support realizing the vision of this strategy. The goals and objectives reflect the themes and directions, derived through the consultation with stakeholders and the broader community, and elevates them to become action-oriented imperatives.

## Goals

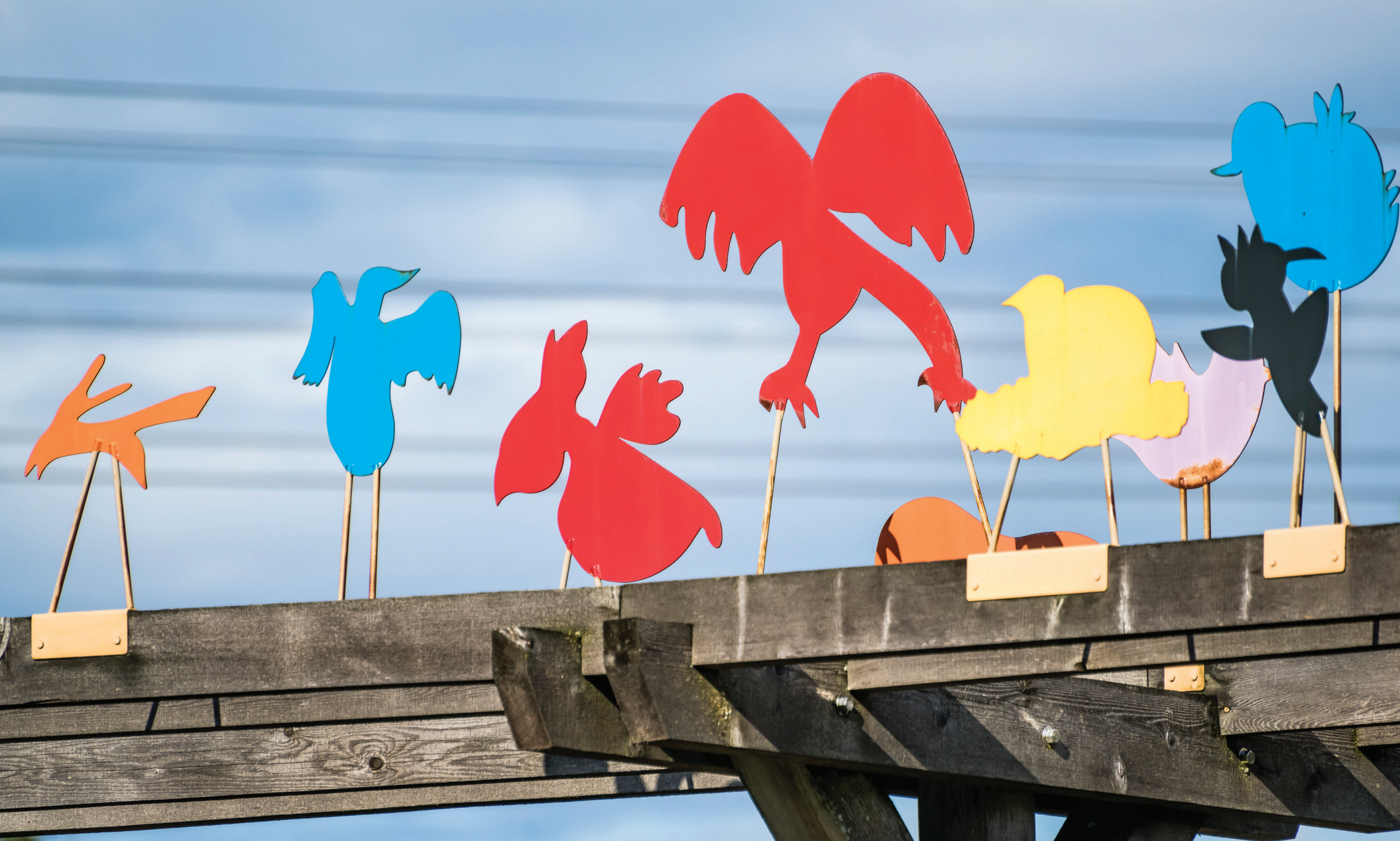
The overarching priorities for Abbotsford.

## Objectives

The major plans or policies that will achieve the priority goals.

## Actions

Individual tasks required to implement the strategy. These actions will be carried out across all City departments and with the support of partners and key stakeholders.



"Birds" by Margaret Stenerson Students, 2010

MUNICIPAL  
LEADERSHIP

## Goal 1

The City of Abbotsford demonstrates active leadership and strategic governance to support a sustainable, flourishing and vibrant cultural sector.

## Objective 1.1

**Enhance investments in culture through strategic funding, community capacity building and continuous improvement in City processes.**

## Key Actions

1. Begin with a review of the current service delivery model, including the governance of Culture between the City and its Fee-for-Service partners
2. Ensure funding supports the highest immediate cultural needs and at appropriate levels for City cultural services
3. Update key policies and plans, including the City's Public Art Policy and Plan
4. Develop a dedicated arts and culture grant program to support vibrant community-led programs, events and activities
5. Build capacity in the culture community through training, development, and sharing data and expertise
6. Consider developer and public private partnerships contributions to enhance investments in culture assets and facilities
7. Align investments in culture with city-wide planning, City of Abbotsford's Strategic Plan and the City's Official Community Plan
8. Establish a One-stop Culture and Events Office to create greater internal synergies and to act as a community resource for City processes and procedures

"I believe that the City could do a better job in supporting local events that are already contributing to local culture - more substantial grants and finding a way that could connect the different groups that put on events to 'share resources'."

- survey respondent



Gur Sikh Temple National Historic Site, located on South Fraser Way, is the oldest Sikh Temple in North America.



## MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP

### Goal 1

The City of Abbotsford demonstrates active leadership and strategic governance to support a sustainable, flourishing and vibrant cultural sector.

## Objective 1.2

**Enable a deeper understanding and appreciation of Abbotsford's past, present, and future by recognizing the value of local cultural, natural, agricultural and built heritage.**

## Key Actions

1. Clarify and streamline the City's heritage management responsibilities between internal departments and external fee-for-service partners
2. Update the City's Heritage Management Plan and develop a framework to guide how both built and natural heritage is assessed, recognized, preserved, programmed and shared
3. Implement actions from the City's Urban Forest Strategy to protect and manage the City's natural tree heritage
4. Identify and protect important natural heritage assets throughout the City
5. Explore the need for a City Archivist to document and preserve important municipal history
6. Welcome new voices and perspectives to story-telling about local customs, beliefs, traditions and other intangible heritage
7. Develop educational heritage programming to learn from the past and ensure Abbotsford is a welcoming and inclusive community



Installation view of the exhibition "Stranger Days" by Artist in Residence Luke Pardy, 2021

MUNICIPAL  
LEADERSHIP

## Goal 1

The City of Abbotsford demonstrates active leadership and strategic governance to support a sustainable, flourishing and vibrant cultural sector.

## Objective 1.3

**Build the local creative economy and leverage culture to boost the City's economic advantage.**

## Key Actions

1. Build a role for culture in economic and tourism planning through greater collaboration and integration between the City's Economic Development and Culture Services areas
2. Expand signature City of Abbotsford events that celebrate agricultural, ethnic, and cultural heritage
3. Align cultural assets, events, and experiences with identified demand in collaboration with Tourism Abbotsford
4. Lead and facilitate engagement and collaboration between Abbotsford's cultural and business communities
5. Develop a cultural tourism brand based on Abbotsford's unique cultural diversity and identity
6. Continue partnership with Creative Cities Network and the Cultural Statistics Strategy (CSS) to provide economic data on the impact of Culture to our local economy

**"Culture is important. It makes us wiser which makes us kinder. Economic gains will follow engagement."**

- survey respondent

# Abbotsford Parks, Recreation & Culture



Local musician Rosza at Jubilee Park





## SPACES & PLACES

### Goal 2

Abbotsford is home to quality and versatile cultural spaces and places that encourage creativity and participation.

## Objective 2.1

**Assess and plan for cultural infrastructure and assets to meet short, medium and long-term needs.**

## Key Actions

1. Complete an audit of current City owned or managed facilities, open spaces, and parks to identify new potential found spaces for culture activities and program
2. Initiate assessments of current cultural assets and facilities including libraries, heritage centres, performance spaces, plazas and galleries, to determine the current state, capacity, and use for future needs planning
3. Conduct a subsequent needs assessment to determine what cultural spaces, places, and facilities may be required and what specific needs these serve including how these would be funded, managed, and operated
4. Strategically invest in current facilities and public spaces to ensure continued use and community enjoyment

“I believe you should create more public spaces for people to engage and share their talents... Space Making in different parks / core areas & a Natural Amphitheatre/ outdoor Performance area” and “More spaces for artists!”

- survey respondent





## SPACES & PLACES

### Goal 2

Abbotsford is home to quality and versatile cultural spaces and places that encourage creativity and participation.

## Objective 2.2

**Use physical and digital spaces to accessibly connect people with culture and their community.**

## Key Actions

1. Plan and provide for amenities in parks and open spaces that allow for spontaneous creativity and organic cultural gatherings
2. Activate non-traditional facilities, open spaces, and parks for cultural programs, activities and events
3. Align and provide for space needs with neighbourhood and park development plans
4. Increase the availability and access to live/work studio spaces by exploring new regulatory and planning tools
5. Plan a central cultural district in Abbotsford in alignment with the Official Community Plan
6. Leverage new technology and expand Wi-Fi in the key public parks and plazas to support digital placemaking and greater connectivity and accessibility



Artist in Residence, Zaira Ramirez, painting in Mill Lake Park, 2021



CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY

Goal 3

Abbotsford is an inclusive and accessible community where diversity is celebrated, and all residents are welcomed and empowered to participate in cultural opportunities.

Objective 3.1

**Engage local youth and emerging artists in the planning and development of cultural programs, facilities, events and services.**

Key Actions

1. Leverage CityStudio to enhance youth and emerging artists' participation in cultural programs and services planning
2. Ensure City programs support local emerging artists and their development
3. Actively seek youth participation on City cultural committees and fee-for-service boards
4. Collaborate with Abbotsford School District 34 and the University of Fraser Valley to support skills development and training programs in the cultural and creative sector
5. Provide programs, services, and spaces that reduce barriers to participation, especially for marginalized and vulnerable youth

**"Unity through culture and art is key in a community. Having events that are accessible to all, to create a sense of community in our town would help bridge the divide between religions and ages."**

"Providing places for local artists to teach classes, share their art for the public to view and purchase, and for local musicians to share and sell their music, would create a rich atmosphere and healthy entertainment for Abbotsford."

- survey respondents



Peter White at Aboriginal Arts and Culture Day



CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY

Goal 3

Abbotsford is an inclusive and accessible community where diversity is celebrated, and all residents are welcomed and empowered to participate in cultural opportunities.

Objective 3.2

**Seek engagement with local First Nations, including Matheqwi, Semá:th, Leq'á:mel and urban Indigenous and Métis Peoples on cultural planning and policy development to reflect local Indigenous knowledge and heritage.**

Key Actions

1. Support a greater understanding of the traditional Stó:lō Peoples and create space for dialogue with the Matheqwi, Semá:th, Leq'á:mel First Nations, as well as Indigenous and Métis Peoples on matters related to Cultural programs and policies
2. Develop an Indigenous Relations Initiative to guide the City's relationships and governance with local First Nations
3. Continue supporting cultural partners and work with new partners to provide Indigenous culture programming and learning opportunities regarding the legacy and heritage of local First Nations and Indigenous Peoples
4. Enhance knowledge and understanding of Indigenous culture and history through training and education for all City representatives
5. Research, identify and recognize Abbotsford's colonial history to fully understand and appreciate the history and experience of Indigenous Peoples, and to seek ways to promote healing across the community through Cultural programming



Nagar Kirtan Abbotsford, 2018





CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY

Goal 3

Abbotsford is an inclusive and accessible community where diversity is celebrated, and all residents are welcomed and empowered to participate in cultural opportunities.

Objective 3.3

**Embrace Abbotsford’s cultural diversity and cultivate a welcoming environment where all people and backgrounds are represented.**

Key Actions

1. Identify and address barriers to participation in cultural programs, facilities, events and services particularly for systemically marginalized groups
2. Celebrate and promote Abbotsford’s rich ethnic heritages in collaboration with local stakeholders
3. Develop and deliver programs and initiatives that reflect all of Abbotsford’s rich diversity while providing opportunities for intercultural and interfaith dialogue
4. Pursue equitable representation on City culture committees and fee-for-service boards
5. Seek ways to combat racism through culture-based strategies that address societal and systemic issues

**"Sacred stories bind us together, they help us to empathize with our neighbors. We need more: Scottish, Roman Catholic, Indigenous, Polish, Korean, LGBTQ+, Female voices to be heard. We need to treasure their stories and values as much as we value anyone else’s."**

- survey respondent



Digital placemaking and wayfinding in Abbotsford parks



## OFFERINGS & AWARENESS

### Goal 4

Abbotsford is a creative City where people value and actively engage in culture.

### Objective 4.1

**Increase the visibility of culture in Abbotsford and communicate everything it has to offer.**

### Key Actions

1. Improve wayfinding for local cultural assets and facilities
2. Develop a cultural program, events, and services marketing and outreach plan in collaboration with key stakeholder and cultural partners
3. As part of the marketing plan, consider language barriers and cross-cultural promotion
4. Establish and support a Cultural Planners network for collaboration and coordination between various activity, program, and event planners



"Lifecycle of a Salmon" by local artist, Raphael Silver, 2010



## OFFERINGS & AWARENESS

### Goal 4

Abbotsford is a creative City where people value and actively engage in culture.

### Objective 4.2

**Attract and build new audiences that support the cultural sector and improve quality of life for residents.**

### Key Actions

1. Invest and encourage private investment in public art and provide more opportunities for temporary public art installations
2. Develop and deliver cultural recreation opportunities within City Recreation Centres and Libraries that promote lifelong learning and participation from beginner to expert
3. Establish an artist-in-residence program to support local artists and promote culture
4. Encourage organic participation in culture through programming such as the “Go Play Outside” initiative

**“Public art... is an extremely important aspect of bringing colour, life and culture into a place.”**

“I would love to see more local artist’s murals around Abbotsford, especially showcasing different cultural art.”

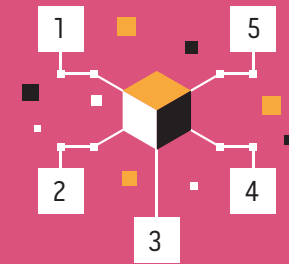
- survey respondents

# 5 BIG MOVES

CULTURE CONNECT ABBOTSFORD IS THE CITY'S FIRST HOLISTIC CULTURE STRATEGY, MARKING A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD.

There are Five Big Moves that form the basis of the initial implementation of Culture Connect. These moves are foundational to the plan and future success. A separate Implementation Plan will also be developed that outlines how the remaining Goals, Objectives, and Actions will be achieved.

## AT A GLANCE 5 BIG MOVES



### 1 Culture Recovery

COVID-19 has had a major impact on the local culture sector. Through this strategy, the City can help support recovery in the sector and provide opportunities for the community to reengage in the cultural activities they have missed through the pandemic.

### 2 Indigenous Engagement

Local Indigenous heritage, culture and Peoples are foundational to Abbotsford's past, present and future. We must seek ways to engage with local First Nations and urban Indigenous Peoples, and Metis Peoples on cultural planning and create space for dialogue and Indigenous programming.

### 3 Service Delivery

The City's culture services are primarily delivered by local fee-for-service partners. It is imperative that the City conduct a governance review its service delivery model for Culture Services to ensure alignment with the goals of the Strategy and value for money.

### 4 Cultural Policy

Many of Abbotsford's cultural policies require updating and need to be reflective of evolving realities, especially related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access.

### 5 One-Stop Shop

Lack of awareness is the biggest barrier to access for many in Abbotsford and addressing it will require a joint effort and strong coordination between the City and local cultural providers.



# 5 BIG MOVES

The 5 Big Moves are drawn from the key actions that lay the sequential foundation for the other actions to be attained with success. Culture Recovery, Indigenous Engagement, Service Delivery, strong Cultural Policy, and the creation of a One-stop Shop will begin the process of updating and enhancing cultural services and support.

## 1 Culture Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a huge setback for the culture sector. Yet, the sector has traditionally been one of the highest economic contributors in British Columbia. The City needs to be ready for recovery and to welcome the community back to culture and the activities, programs, facilities, festivals and events many have missed. Increasing funding for local events and offering a one-time grant for events and activities after public health restrictions lift, will support community recovery, attract tourism back to Abbotsford and help the Culture Sector get back on its feet and ready to deliver on the goals of the Strategy.

## 2 Indigenous Engagement

There is a strong desire for increased indigenous culture and heritage programming. The City recognizes the need to first engage, listen, and create the space for dialogue and programming for Indigenous artists and people. Seeking meaningful engagement with local First Nations including Matheqwi, Sema:th, Leq'á:mel, and urban Indigenous and Metis peoples on cultural programming, and policy, can provide new opportunities to learn about Abbotsford's full history, the experience of Indigenous Peoples, and provide opportunities for learning and understanding through Culture.



Mennonite Heritage Museum





City of Abbotsford Canada Day, Dale Klippenstein



### 3 Service Delivery

Currently, the City primarily delivers its cultural services through funding agreements with three local culture organizations: The Reach Gallery Museum (Abbotsford Culture Centre Society), Abbotsford Arts Council, and Heritage Abbotsford Society. These are longstanding arrangements that the City has generally sustained year over year with minimal funding changes. It is imperative that the City conduct a governance review of its service delivery model for Culture Services to clarify roles and responsibilities, ensure alignment with the goals of the Strategy and value for money.

### 5 One-stop Shop

Lack of awareness is the biggest barrier to access for many in Abbotsford and addressing it will require a joint effort and strong coordination between the City and cultural providers across the City. Establishing a cultural planners network and working towards the creation of a single portal (digital and non-digital) for advertising and marketing all that Abbotsford has to offer would likely improve access, satisfaction with local offerings and ensure residents stay and spend on local culture activities.

### 4 Cultural Policy

Many of Abbotsford's cultural policies require updating and need to be reflective of evolving realities, especially related to diversity, equity, inclusion and access. As the City grows, policies related to Events, Public Art and Heritage Management and Conservation will be imperative to support effective and efficient governance. There is a need for varied funding sources, new revenue streams for culture, and clear policies which will help the City attract new investment and leverage contributions from the development community for cultural assets and infrastructure.

# Glossary

**Cultural Assets:** A cultural asset is something that has value because of its contribution to a community's creativity, knowledge, traditions, culture, meaning, and vitality. They can be the places you visit to express your cultural identity, and/or the resources one uses to pursue a creative practice. They can be tangible assets such as cultural facilities, specific buildings, or physical works of art. They can even be intangible and temporal things such as annual events, shared cultural stories, or cultural landmarks and icons that no longer exist.

<https://www.austintexas.gov/faq/what-cultural-asset>

**Cultural Vitality:** Cultural vitality is the evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/50676/311392-Cultural-Vitality-in-Communities-Interpretation-and-Indicators.PDF>

**Digital Place-making:** The augmentation of physical places with location-specific digital services, products or experiences to create more meaningful destinations for all.

<https://calvium.com/resources/digital-placemaking/>

**Intangible Cultural Heritage:** Intangible Cultural Heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated with – those communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=EN&pg=00022>

**Leq'á:mel:** “A level place where people meet”, is the name for the Leq'á:mel First Nation, signatory to the Stó:lō Nation, and is located 22 kilometers east of Mission BC, and has territory across the Fraser Valley Regional District, including land bordering Abbotsford. <http://leqamel.ca/discover-leqamel/about-leqamel/>

**Matheqwí:** The Matheqwí people are a Sto:lo group located in the Central Fraser Valley region of British Columbia, Canada. Their band government is the Matsqui First Nation, a member of the Sto:lo Nation Tribal Council. The core traditional territory of the Matsqui stretches along the Fraser River from Crescent Island to Sumas Mountain, and southward beyond the Canada-United States border. <https://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/lower-mainland-southwest/matsqui>

**Sema:th:** The Sema:th people were known as the fierce wolf people and were a part of the larger Stó:lō Nation. Their lands were central to the Coast Salish territory; and their families moved freely amongst their villages to gather food and practice ceremony. Our traditional lands include Sumas Mountain, Sema:th lake and drainage of the Stat'lo' (streams) which lead into it. <http://www.sumasfirstnation.com/about-us/>

**Stó:lō People:** The Stó:lō People are the “People of the River”. S'olh Temexw is the traditional territory of the Stó:lō people. They have been here since time immemorial. The Stó:lō traditional territory extends from Yale to Langley, BC. <https://www.stolonation.bc.ca/>



Honk, Honk by Dean Lauze, 2001



## Acknowledgements

The development of this Strategy is thanks to the efforts of many dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate participants.

Over the past two years over a thousand individuals have lent their time, concerns, questions, thoughts and ideas that have shaped Culture Connect Abbotsford, and the City of Abbotsford is grateful to all community members who have contributed to this endeavor. This has not been an easy or straightforward undertaking and we appreciate and acknowledge the community's patience and participant's willingness to lend their voices in new ways as we managed this process through the COVID-19 pandemic.

We hope every resident is excited to usher in a new era of Culture in Abbotsford.

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